

## *Euphagus carolinus* (Rusty Blackbird)

### Priority 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

**Class:** Aves (Birds)

**Order:** Passeriformes (Perching Birds)

**Family:** Icteridae (Bobolink, Blackbirds, Cowbirds, Grackles, Meadowlarks, And Orioles)

#### General comments:

80% decline continent-wide in mid 1970's, range contraction of about 100 miles in Maine, fewer than 50 current occurrences, but too many to justify Threatened; keep SC

#### Species Conservation Range Maps for Rusty Blackbird:

Town Map: [Euphagus carolinus\\_Towns.pdf](#)

Subwatershed Map: [Euphagus carolinus\\_HUC12.pdf](#)

#### SGCN Priority Ranking - Designation Criteria:

##### Risk of Extirpation:

IUCN Red List Status: **Vulnerable**

##### State Special Concern or NMFS Species of Concern:

*Euphagus carolinus* is listed as a species of Special Concern in Maine.

##### Recent Significant Declines: NA

##### Regional Endemic: NA

##### High Regional Conservation Priority:

United States Birds of Conservation Concern:

Bird of Conservation Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 14 and/or 30: Yes

##### High Climate Change Vulnerability: NA

##### Understudied rare taxa: NA

##### Historical: NA

##### Culturally Significant: NA

#### Habitats Assigned to Rusty Blackbird:

Formation Name		Boreal Upland Forest
Macrogroup Name		Boreal Upland Forest
Habitat System Name:		Acadian Low Elevation Spruce-Fir-Hardwood Forest <b>Notes:</b> Nesting habitat when regenerating from harvest
Habitat System Name:		Acadian Sub-boreal Spruce Flat <b>Notes:</b> Nesting habitat when trees are short or regenerating
Habitat System Name:		Acadian-Appalachian Montane Spr-Fir-Hwd Forest <b>Notes:</b> Nesting habitat when regenerating from harvest
Habitat System Name:		Boreal Jack Pine-Black Spruce Forest <b>Notes:</b> Nesting habitat when regenerating from harvest
Formation Name		Boreal Wetland Forest
Macrogroup Name		Boreal Forested Peatland
Habitat System Name:		Boreal-Laurentian Conifer Acidic Swamp <b>Notes:</b> nesting and foraging
Formation Name		Freshwater Marsh
Macrogroup Name		Modified-Managed Marsh
Habitat System Name:		Modified-Managed Marsh Macrogroup - Unknown Habitat System <b>Notes:</b> Beaver influenced is most common
Macrogroup Name		Wet Meadow-Shrub Marsh
Habitat System Name:		Laurentian-Acadian Wet Meadow-Shrub Swamp

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**Formation Name**      **Northeastern Wetland Forest****Macrogroup Name**      **Northeastern Floodplain Forest****Habitat System Name:** Laurentian-Acadian Floodplain Systems**Macrogroup Name**      **Northern Swamp****Habitat System Name:** Acadian-Appalachian Conifer Seepage Forest    **Notes:** nesting here when regenerating from harvest**Habitat System Name:** Laurentian-Acadian Alkaline Conifer-Hardwood Swamp**Habitat System Name:** Northern Appalachian-Acadian Conifer-Hardwood Acidic Swamp**Formation Name**      **Peatland****Macrogroup Name**      **Northern Peatland & Fens****Habitat System Name:** Acadian Maritime Bog**Habitat System Name:** Boreal-Laurentian Bog**Habitat System Name:** Boreal-Laurentian-Acadian Acidic Basin Fen**Habitat System Name:** Laurentian-Acadian Alkaline Fen**Habitat System Name:** North-Central Interior and Appalachian Acidic Peatland**Stressors Assigned to Rusty Blackbird:**

Stressor Priority Level based on Severity and Actionability	Moderate Severity		High Severity	
	Highly Actionable	Medium-High	High	High
	Moderately Actionable	Medium	Medium-High	Medium-High
	Actionable with Difficulty	Low	Low	Low

**IUCN Level 1 Threat****Other Options****IUCN Level 2 Threat:** Lack of knowledge**Severity:** Severe**Actionability:** Moderately actionable**Notes:** Still do not understand what caused decline or failure to recover. Pop may still be declining.**IUCN Level 1 Threat****Invasive and Other Problematic Species, Genes and Diseases****IUCN Level 2 Threat:** Problematic Native Species-Diseases**Severity:** Moderate Severity**Actionability:** Moderately actionable**Notes:** Temporary but extreme nest predation as function of cone cycle/red Squirrel numeric response**IUCN Level 1 Threat****Pollution****IUCN Level 2 Threat:** Air-Bourne Pollutants**Severity:** Moderate Severity**Actionability:** Moderately actionable**Notes:** Hg, Acid rain**IUCN Level 1 Threat****Climate Change and Severe Weather****IUCN Level 2 Threat:** Habitat Shifting or Alteration**Severity:** Severe**Actionability:** Actionable with difficulty**Notes:** Climate change**Species Level Conservation Actions Assigned to Rusty Blackbird:**

*\*Only species specific conservation actions that address high (red) or medium-high (orange) priority stressors are*

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*summarized here.*

<b>Conservation Action</b>	<b>Category:</b> Research	<b>Biological Priority:</b> high	<b>Type:</b> new
Examine the food web of boreal forest wetlands and determine the role of aquatic invertebrates (Tricoptera, Odonata) in maintaining Rusty Blackbird abundance and productivity.			

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

<b>Conservation Action</b>	<b>Category:</b> Research	<b>Biological Priority:</b> high	<b>Type:</b> new
Investigate postfledging habitat use relative to timber harvest practices			

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

<b>Conservation Action</b>	<b>Category:</b> Species Management	<b>Biological Priority:</b> high	<b>Type:</b> new
Work with partners on wintering grounds to develop a full life cycle model of Demography			

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

<b>Conservation Action</b>	<b>Category:</b> Research	<b>Biological Priority:</b> high	<b>Type:</b> on-going
Support cross-agency data sharing to better understand breeding range-wide survival and fecundity.			

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

<b>Conservation Action</b>	<b>Category:</b> Research	<b>Biological Priority:</b> high	<b>Type:</b> new
Evaluate the effects of precommercial thinning on nesting habitat quality and determine whether nesting success is more sensitive to pre-commercial thinning in some landscapes than in others			

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Lack of knowledge

Habitat Shifting or Alteration

### Guild Level Conservation Actions:

This Species is currently not attributed to a guild.

### Broad Taxonomic Group Conservation Actions:

Additional relevant conservation actions for this species are assigned within broader taxonomic groups in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-1.

### Habitat Based Conservation Actions:

Additional conservation actions that may benefit habitat(s) associated with this species can be found in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-15. Click on the Habitat Grouping of interest to launch a habitat based report summarizing relevant conservation actions and associated SGCN.

*The Wildlife Action Plan was developed through a lengthy participatory process with state agencies, targeted conservation partners, and the general public. The Plan is non-regulatory. The species, stressors, and voluntary conservation actions identified in the Plan complement, but do not replace, existing work programs and priorities by state agencies and partners.*